(c) what are the details thereof and what further steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) No, Sir. However complaints are occasionally, received in this regard.

(b) and (c) The oil companies and the State Governments|Union Territory Administrations conduct regular and surprise inspections of retail outlets periodically to check *inter-alia* quality and quantity of the products and take aCtion against the defaulters under the Marketing Discipline Guidelines and the law|regula-tions in force.

Over 18600 inspections have been conducted during the last 6 months. No case of proven adulteration has been detected. Some cases of suspected adulteration have been reported. Oil Companies have taken . suitable actions such as suspension of supplies for 15 days, issuing Of warnings, etc. in approriate cases. in other cases, the State authorities have initiated necessary action-

The State Govts, have been advised, to review for cancellation or non-renewal of cases where licences for storage etc. of MS1HSD have been granted by local authorities to persons other than dealers of oil marketing companies in order to prevent malpractices in the sale of pet roleum products. They have been advised also to take preventive and punitive action against those who store and sell petroleum products without any valid licences, etc. This is being periodically regularly pursued with the respective States|Union Territories.

Oil and Gas Exploration in Onshore and Offshore Areas

938. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of PET ROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to intensify oil and gas exploration in both onshore and offshore areas;

(b) if so, what are the details of the sites identified for this task;

(c) by when the exploration work will start at these places; and

(d) to what extent the oil and gas crisis will be met?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI BRAHM DUTT): (a) to (c) Yes Sir. Intensification of exploratory activities during the VII Plan period is planned in the following sedimentary basins:—

(1) Cambay

(2) Upper Assam

(3) AssamArakan Fold belt covering Cachar, Nagaland, Tripura, Aruna-chal Pradesh

(4) Rajasthan

(5) Himalayan Foothills and Ganga Valley

(6) Krishna-Godavar; (both onland and offshore)

(7) Cauvery (both onland & offshore)

(8) West Bengal (both onland & offshore)

(9) Kutch-Saurashtra (both onland & offshore)

(10 Bombay offshore

(11) Kerala-Konkon (offshore)

(12) Andamans (offshore)

The exploration work is already continuing in these basins.

(d) It is not possible to quantify the results of exploration at this stage.

Hiring Foreign Fainns to Explore Oil and Natural Gas

939. SHRI HARVENDRA SINGH HANSPAL: Will the Minister of PET-ROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS bo pleased to state.

(a) whether Govt, propose to hire foreign firms to explore oil and natural gas in the country's offshore basins;